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ABSTRACT

A brief summary is given of the rationale for each of the six National Education Goals announced by President Bush and the nation's governors in February 1990, and measures to meet each goal are proposed. To meet goal 1, readiness for school, measures related to the following issues are included: prenatal care, parent education, health care, and home to school transition. For goal 2, school completion, measures include: early intervention, remedial education, dropout prevention and reentry programs, and community involvement. To meet goal 3, student achievement and citizenship, measures include: accountability of student, school employees, schools, communities, and parents; shared decision making; and international education. Some measures proposed to meet goal 4, science and mathematics achievement, relate to: school personnel, professional development, curriculum, and access. Measures for goal 5, adult literacy and lifelong learning, include: school-to-work transition, adult literacy programs, vocational-technical education, postsecondary student assistance, and educating for democracy. To meet the final goal--safe, disciplined, and drug-free schools--the proposed measures include: community involvement, drug education, referral and treatment, and government and community action to reduce violence in schools. (IAH)

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Goals 2000: Mobilizing For Action

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ACHIEVING THE NATIONAL EDUCATION GOALS

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GOAL 1: *Readiness for School*

By the year 2000, all children in America will start school ready to learn.

School readiness depends on parents' ability to assure that their children's emotional, developmental, social, health, and nutritional needs are met. When the family structure is incapable of providing such support, public agencies must have the programs and resources to serve children's needs. State and federal agencies must help establish and maintain programs that contribute to the health and well-being of disadvantaged children from birth.

As many as 5 million children below the age of six live in poverty. Poverty cripples every aspect of children's physical, emotional, and intellectual development. As the Committee for Economic Development has repeatedly stated: "Early intervention in the lives of disadvantaged youth is the most effective strategy for school improvement."

The National Education Association believes the following measures are necessary to meet Goal 1.

PRENATAL CARE State and federal governments must cooperate to provide better access to prenatal care, including proper nutrition. At the same time, public and private agencies must work cooperatively in education efforts to assure that women of child-bearing age understand the importance of prenatal care to child development.

PARENT EDUCATION Many young parents lack the knowledge or resources to properly feed and care for children. Some lack reading skills necessary to nurture children's intellectual development. Parent education programs are desperately needed -- and are most effective when connected to child care and human services programs where skills can be reinforced.

HEALTH CARE Some 37 million Americans are uninsured, and as many as 60 million Americans are underinsured. Of the uninsured, at least one-fourth are children. Quality, affordable health care must be accessible to all Americans. Expanding medical coverage will help assure that physical impediments to learning are identified and treated.

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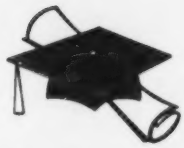
NUTRITION Extensive research has demonstrated a direct relationship between nutrition and intellectual development. Good nutrition is essential, especially in the early years when children develop so rapidly. The Supplemental Feeding Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) now serves some 4.6 million low-income pregnant and postpartum women and children under the age of four, about half of those in need. Food Stamps and WIC should be funded at levels adequate to serve all eligible persons.

SERVICES FOR THE HOMELESS As many as 100,000 children in America are growing up on the streets, in cars, in abandoned buildings, and in transient hotels. Community-based efforts to reach these children and provide programs that meet both physical and developmental needs must be established and maintained by both public and private agencies.

CHILD CARE The quality of child care and education are inextricably linked. Six out of 10 women with children under the age of six are employed outside the home. States should set standards for health and safety, preparation of providers, and class size to ensure that child care programs offer more than custodial care. Financial support must be provided to expand access for those children who need quality child care the most. Public-supported child care programs should include children from various economic, racial, and ethnic backgrounds to avoid social stratification. Parental leave should be available for the birth, adoption or serious illness of a child.

HEAD START The successful federal Head Start program must have resources adequate to serve all eligible children. In 1989-90, less than one-fifth of all eligible 3-, 4-, and 5-year-olds have access to Head Start's education, nutrition, and health care services. The federal government must provide the resources to establish full-day and year-round programs and to attract and retain quality staff.

HOME TO SCHOOL TRANSITION Public education should be available to children beginning at age 3, and schools should establish programs in the early grades that help ease the transition from home to school. School-based child care, including early childhood education and before- and after-school programs, should become a part of every school.



GOAL 2: *School Completion*

By the year 2000, the high school graduation rate will increase to at least 90 percent.

Achieving a 90 percent high school completion rate will require improvements in every aspect of the public schools. At present, the national high school completion rate is only 72 percent, and in some communities half the students who begin high school fail to graduate. Rigorous teacher preparation programs, high standards for entry into the teaching profession, higher salaries for all education employees, reduced class size, and school restructuring are essential to a comprehensive dropout reduction plan.

Meeting these objectives will take a true partnership of local, state, and federal agencies. Public officials at every level must reorder priorities to assure adequate resources for public education. School finance formulas at the federal and state level must direct funds to communities with inadequate resources and emphasize programs that help students who are economically disadvantaged, disabled, or hampered by language barriers.

Resources alone are not enough, but without adequate funding no education program can be successful.

The National Education Association believes the following measures are necessary to meet Goal 2.

EARLY INTERVENTION The most effective dropout prevention programs reach out to students early in their academic careers. Federal, state, and local authorities should cooperate to provide two weeks of intensive work for selected elementary school students prior to the start of school each year.

REMEDIAL EDUCATION If students fall behind in the elementary grades or before, they are much less likely to complete their formal education. Federally funded Chapter 1 math and reading programs for disadvantaged students have proven

effective in assuring that students improve in basic skills. Chapter 1 must be provided resources sufficient to serve all eligible students.

DROPOUT PREVENTION AND REENTRY PROGRAMS Federal and state governments should provide resources for local programs that encourage students to stay in school or reenter after they've left. Such programs should have smaller class size, concentrate on basic skills, and be coordinated with other services that get at the social roots of the dropout rate, including teenage pregnancy and parenting, the need to work, drug abuse, and alienation.

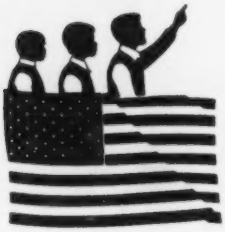
TEACHING PROFESSION Assuring there is a qualified teacher in every classroom is essential to reducing the dropout rate. States must set rigorous preparation and licensure requirements for the teaching profession. A voluntary national certification program that supplements state standards and local hiring decisions would provide an additional assurance of quality. No state should adopt policies that allow untrained and unprepared individuals in the classroom. Teachers must have an effective voice in decisions affecting the classroom, including the right to bargain collectively on issues that affect the quality of education.

TEACHER COMPENSATION Any discussion of teacher recruitment, retention, and standards must consider higher salaries for education employees. Salaries for education employees ought to reach levels at least equivalent to those in professions requiring comparable skills and education. Collective bargaining will continue to be an essential means to assure adequate compensation.

CLASS SIZE Class size is critical to quality education, especially in the elementary grades. Smaller class sizes provide time for individual attention and imaginative teaching styles instead of rote memorization. In elementary schools in many states the teacher-pupil ratio is as high as 1 to 32. In many cities, elementary class size is much higher than that. Most professionals believe class sizes should be no larger than 15.

EQUITY School programs that segregate students by ability, by race, or by socioeconomic background lead to social stratification that can have serious educational -- and political -- consequences. Equal access to quality education reinforces our nation's democratic principles and establishes a learning culture that builds peer pressure to stay in school and succeed.

COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT America's public schools must have greater support and involvement from the communities they serve. Schools and parents must engage in an ongoing dialogue centered on school needs and actions that address those needs.



GOAL 3: *Student Achievement and Citizenship*

By the year 2000, American students will leave grades four, eight, and twelve having demonstrated competency in challenging subject matter including English, mathematics, science, history, and geography; and every school in America will ensure that all students learn to use their minds well, so they may be prepared for responsible citizenship, further learning, and productive employment in our modern economy.

> *For far too long, America's students have been stuck between the two covers of a book, the four walls of a classroom, and the six periods of the school day. Comprehensive school restructuring that gives autonomy and flexibility to classroom teachers is essential to breaking out of that mold. Today's public schools must focus on discovery rather than lecture; collaboration rather than competition; participation rather than control.*
>
> *Basic literacy and numeracy will always be the building blocks of learning. Mastery of subject matter must be the goal, not simply moving students through the institution known as school. Critical thinking must be a focus of the curriculum from the beginning.*
>
> *Public schools should encourage a sense of responsibility for oneself, for one's family, and for one's community. By setting high standards for students, and providing the means to help all students achieve them, public schools will continue as the primary institution for preparing Americans for the workplace, for a free society, and for successful lives.*

The National Education Association believes the following measures are necessary to meet Goal 3.

ACCOUNTABILITY OF STUDENTS Standardized tests are one means of measuring the effectiveness of education programs. But standardized tests should not be overemphasized or misapplied. The best measure of mastery over subject matter are rigorous tests developed by the teachers themselves. In addition, new methods should be developed to measure skills that don't lend themselves to pencil-and-paper tests, such as leadership, written and oral communications, creativity, and critical thinking.

ACCOUNTABILITY OF SCHOOL EMPLOYEES Every school district should have a comprehensive system of personnel evaluation, mutually designed through the collective bargaining process. Regular assessment and supportive resources will ensure that those who continue to teach are competent. Evaluation procedures should be able to help quality education employees improve and assist those who need skills-building with inservice education. The due process rights of all education employees must be protected.

ACCOUNTABILITY OF SCHOOLS Citizens must be active participants in existing democratic methods of assuring accountability for the public schools: the election of local, state, and federal officials who will support continuing improvement of education programs.

ACCOUNTABILITY OF COMMUNITIES AND PARENTS Parents must collaborate with educators to become more active participants in the education of their own children. Other institutions, including religious and community organizations, private businesses, and public agencies, must support the public school's mission.

SHARED DECISION-MAKING Establishing cooperative systems for making essential decisions about local schools is the only way to bring about dramatic, positive change at the school site. Parents, professional educators, and noncertificated education employees must be involved in the decision-making process.

CRITICAL THINKING Creativity, problem-solving, and cross-pollenization of ideas are essential to America's future economic vitality. Critical thinking and writing skills must be an essential component of every discipline within the public school curriculum. And the elements of critical thinking must be encouraged in every facet of young people's lives.

EDUCATION OF THE HANDICAPPED Society must recognize that not all students are equally equipped to meet the same standards. Free, appropriate education opportunities must be available to all students, regardless of physical or intellectual disability. The federal government must significantly increase financial assistance to state and local governments for education of the handicapped programs.

INTERNATIONAL EDUCATION The geopolitical dynamics of our world have changed dramatically in recent years. Continued change is inevitable. Today's public school students must have access to information about political geography, economic and political systems, and world cultures that will help them become leaders in the international arena.

GOAL 4: *Science and Mathematics*

By the year 2000, U.S. students will be first in the world in science and mathematics achievement.

Continuing technological developments and an era of unparalleled scientific discovery will continue to place tremendous pressures on our society, on the workplace, and on the schools.

Today's students must be prepared to know more than static facts. They must have a framework for understanding new information, and they must be able to contribute to the ongoing process of discovery, invention, and application.

Mathematics and science education may be a priority, but not at the expense of other academic disciplines. Improvements in personnel, curriculum, and facilities aimed at improving mathematics and science education must be a part of a comprehensive school improvement plan.

The National Education Association believes the following measures are necessary to meet Goal 4.

PERSONNEL Standards and compensation for all teachers must be improved to attract and retain qualified professionals who can help students excel in math and science. Such efforts must be consistent with programs and policies that address the overall teacher shortage in other key curriculum areas and in urban and rural school districts. Federal and state governments must establish programs to encourage women and minorities to pursue careers in math and science -- including teaching.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT School districts, with assistance from state and federal agencies, should expand access to high quality professional development opportunities for practicing teachers -- both those currently teaching in math and science and those interested in gaining licensure to teach in these fields. The National Science Foundation should fund six- to eight-week summer workshops in every state for teachers to learn effective methods for teaching science.

FACILITIES Antiquated laboratories and equipment must be replaced, and access to computers must be dramatically expanded. Many school districts still use equipment purchased with funds provided through the National Defense Education Act in 1958. About half of America's public schools were built before 1959; one-fourth were built before 1949; 16 percent were built before 1939. Nationwide the cost of needed new construction, renovation, and repair of the nation's public schools is more than $125 billion.

CURRICULUM Curriculum and materials must be reviewed and refined as part of a comprehensive effort to raise academic achievement. At the same time, students must be provided the means to meet those higher standards through smaller class size and greater access to educational technology.

ACCESS Schools and society should encourage greater participation in advanced math and science courses, especially for women and minorities. In 1986, whites were 86 percent of all persons holding doctorate degrees in science and engineering, and men were 96 percent of all engineers, 86 percent of all physical scientists, and 74 percent of all mathematicians.

POSTSECONDARY EDUCATION Math and science must be emphasized at the postsecondary level, including in vocational and technical training. Federal and state scholarships, grants, and loans must be provided to encourage students to pursue advanced math and science studies, with incentives to encourage greater participation by women and minorities. State and federal governments must provide resources to improve university research facilities and to support scholars involved in both applied and pure research.

GOAL 5: *Adult Literacy and Lifelong Learning*

By the year 2000, every adult American will be literate and will possess the knowledge and skills necessary to compete in a global economy and exercise the rights and responsibilities of citizenship.

> *As the world grows more complex, and the workplace grows more demanding, education must be seen as a lifetime commitment.*
>
> *Full literacy and lifelong learning must become a national mission. Adult literacy, skills training, and continuing education programs should be a part of every worksite. Greater access to community-based and school-based adult education opportunities must be provided through direct assistance and tax exemptions. America must become a nation of learners, where knowledge is respected and educators are revered.*

The National Education Association believes the following measures are necessary to meet Goal 5.

SCHOOL-TO-WORK TRANSITION A one-semester course in career education is not enough to help most noncollege-bound students make the transition into the workforce. Schools and the business and professional community must work together to establish a common understanding of the skills needed by the workforce. At the same time, local businesses must demonstrate a clear link between academic achievement and economic opportunities.

ADULT LITERACY As many as 23 million Americans are functionally illiterate. Outreach and support -- especially as a part of worksite or job training programs -- are key elements of a national campaign to bring about full literacy. Schools, community organizations, and public agencies, including libraries, must establish and support programs that help adults gain basic literacy and numeracy skills.

CONTINUING EDUCATION Continuing education -- both job-related and general -- must be a part of our culture. U.S. firms spend $30 billion a year training workers, but just 1 percent of all companies provide 90 percent of corporate-based training. In addition, each year 26 million Americans take courses for job-related reasons. Federal

and state governments should create incentives, including tax incentives and direct aid, for employers to establish and maintain programs that give adults opportunities to learn.

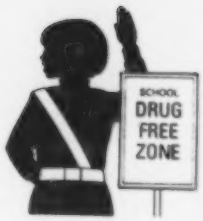
VOCATIONAL-TECHNICAL EDUCATION Quality vocational and technical programs offered as a part of the secondary and postsecondary curriculum are integral to productivity and competitiveness. Vocational programs should emphasize basic skills, such as reading and math. Public funds should be provided to support programs that encourage women, minorities, the disadvantaged, and the handicapped to pursue skilled careers. In addition, federal and state funds should be provided to vocational and technical schools to expand their access to up-to-date technology.

POSTSECONDARY STUDENT ASSISTANCE Federal postsecondary student assistance has declined markedly over the past decade. In 1980-81, the average federal student aid package was sufficient to pay for 60 percent of the average costs of attendance; in 1990-91, it paid only 40 percent. This burden falls inequitably on those least able to afford it, resulting in fewer disadvantaged and minority students pursuing postsecondary education opportunities. Federal, state, and institutional student aid programs must assure that no qualified student is denied access to postsecondary education because of financial need.

INSTITUTIONAL AID Federal aid to the nation's colleges and universities is critical to our nation's ability to create new products, develop new services, and improve technologies. Federal and state governments must make a substantial investment in research facilities, libraries, and fellowships in areas of national need. At the same time, an investment in arts and humanities is essential to the soul of our nation.

COMMUNITY LIBRARIES Access to information ought to be the birthright of every American. Public and private agencies must support public libraries that provide access to books, magazines, newspapers, computerized data bases, and other information sources.

EDUCATING FOR DEMOCRACY The public schools provide young Americans with their first opportunity to participate in a democracy. Young Americans learn the Pledge of Allegiance, vote for student council, and participate in school clubs and committees. American government and political systems should be taught, but democracy should also be practiced in the public schools.



GOAL 6: *Safe, Disciplined and Drug-Free*

By the year 2000, every school in America will be free of drugs and violence and will offer a disciplined environment conducive to learning.

America's public schools -- like the communities they serve -- face growing pressures from societal problems that impede their mission. Alcohol and drug abuse affect students and schools from the elementary grades on; violence and intimidation are a serious threat, especially in many urban areas; premature sexual involvement, and the attendant problems of teen pregnancy and sexually transmitted disease, affect the lives of millions of young Americans.

Schools cannot survive as enclaves insulated from these conditions. Families and the community at large, including both public and private agencies, must work together to protect children, not only in school, but also in the community at large.

The National Education Association believes the following measures are necessary to meet Goal 6.

COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT In many communities, parents, business leaders, and others want to get involved in education. Nothing they can do is more important than creating an environment that is supportive of the mission of the public schools. Communication between parents and children is the first and most important step. But in troubled communities, the pressures on America's youth are so intense that young people need constant positive reinforcement. Public agencies, religious institutions, and community organizations must all play a role in giving young people constructive role models, support, and hope.

FACILITIES The communities most prone to experience serious social problems are generally those with the fewest resources for quality education facilities, equipment, and materials. Schools must strictly enforce policies regarding possession of drugs, alcohol, and weapons. When necessary, schools must have tight security. But they must also be desirable places for students to go. Federal and state agencies must provide additional resources to help support facilities and programs that give young people a real alternative to "hanging out."

DRUG EDUCATION Education about drugs, alcohol, and other substance abuse is the most effective prevention strategy there is. Age-appropriate substance abuse education must be a part of the school curriculum from kindergarten through 12th grade. Parental and peer involvement are essential elements of any effective drug education program.

HEALTH AND SOCIAL SERVICES Every student should have direct and confidential access to health, social, and psychological services within both school and community settings. Such services must be provided by appropriately licensed personnel and must be coordinated among the school, home, and community.

REFERRAL AND TREATMENT Drug rehabilitation should be required for any person convicted of drug possession or use. Between 1974 and 1985, the percentage of 12- to 17-year-olds who smoke cigarettes fell from 25 percent to 16 percent. Alcohol abuse declined from 34 percent to 31.5 percent. Marijuana and cocaine use rose slightly, from 12 to 12.3 percent and 1 to 1.8 percent, respectively. The use of inhalants -- such as glue, paint thinner, and gasoline -- grew alarmingly, from .7 percent, or 400,000 in 1974 to 3.4 percent or 730,000 in 1985. Schools should have the means to provide intervention that leads to treatment, as well as a supportive environment for school-aged youth who are recovering from substance abuse.

VIOLENCE IN THE SCHOOLS In 1989, some 5,600 Americans under 19 were killed with firearms. Each month, some 5,200 secondary school teachers are assaulted at school; about 282,000 secondary school students are physically attacked at school. First, the U.S. must take measures to set tighter controls on handguns and assault weapons. Second, communities must take steps to transform schools into smaller, more personalized environments that reduce alienation and distrust between students and teachers and within peer groups.

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